

May 15, 2006

To Mr. Dan Stears and Family;

My name is Heather Johnson; I was recently a recipient of the Sheri Stears Education Scholarship. I am writing you this letter as a sincere thank you for allowing me to have been bestowed with this wonderful honor. Being an aspiring teacher, I feel so incredibly fortunate to have received this scholarship in the name of someone who greatly touched the lives of so many.

I hope you find it fitting that this award has been given to me, a lifelong Alaskan who has received all of my education from Anchorage schools. I attended Baxter Elementary and Wendler Junior High, and was in high school at Bartlett during the time in which Sheri was Assistant Principal. Although I did not know her well, I remember her as being incredibly kind and *always* exuding a very positive energy. I have made a point lately to ask my high school friends what they remember of Mrs. Stears. They have provided me with fond memories of her being very energetic, a wonderful speaker, and always friendly. Each of them mentioned the fact that she always had a smile on her face. Mostly, I find it interesting that every one I have talked to has used the same word to describe Sheri, *genuine*.

It is only a couple of weeks now before I will have completed my year-long internship, and will officially be a certified teacher in the Anchorage School District. My chief goal is to serve as a positive force in the lives of our Anchorage youth, as the educators of Alaska have been to me through out my entire life. I am dedicated to working endlessly to do everything within my power to ensure the success of every student who crosses my path. I plan to do this by establishing a positive classroom environment where all students feel comfortable taking risks and remaining actively involved in their education. One of the things I find to be the most important is making sure that all students feel connected, to their peers, to me as their teacher, and even to their community. It is through demonstrating a sincere compassion for every student, along with providing a fun and interesting curriculum, that I hope to offer the best learning experience possible to my students.

So if all goes as planned, this fall I will begin the school year with my first classroom. Going into this new endeavor, I am going to keep Sheri's motto in mind by continuing to push myself to become a better educator and person with each day. I know if I am able to emanate even an ounce of the charisma that Sheri exhibited in my own teaching, then I will be successful in making a difference in the lives of many. Once again, thank you so much for providing me with this chance to have been a part of Sheri Stears' legacy.

Take Care,

*Heather Johnson*

